

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN**



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**GAO Tells Davis National Guard**  
**Faces Continuing Resource Problems**

**Washington, D.C.** – The GAO report, *GAO-05-21 Reserve Forces – Actions Needed to Better Prepare the National Guard for Future Overseas and Domestic Missions*, conducted at the request of the House Government Reform Committee Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and National Security Subcommittee Chairman Christopher Shays (R-CT), makes it clear that the Department of Defense (DOD) has taken steps to enhance the readiness of the Army and Air National Guard but still has a long way to go toward measured improvements.

This GAO report illustrates what the Committee has already learned through several hearings: while the Army and Air National Guard personnel are making significant contributions to the nation's security, it is less certain that they will be able to continue to be resourced and equipped to fulfill their massive overseas federal responsibilities, as well as the states' needs relating to homeland defense and security emergencies, and other traditional state missions.

"The GAO study reports that both Army and Air National Guard post deployment readiness has been degraded due to increased demands for people and usage of equipment. DOD needs to submit a plan to Congress on how they will improve the Army Guard structure and readiness for continuing overseas operations. Although DOD has attempted to solve these challenges, the situation is still intolerable and their current initiatives are too new to judge their effectiveness," said Chairman Davis. "In June 2004, I initiated two additional GAO studies focusing specifically on Guard equipment for overseas and homeland missions and whether current DOD policies will address the Guard's resourcing. We rely heavily on the Guard and the Guard should be able to rely on us to make sure they have all the equipment and training they need to protect and defend this country."

The study also concludes that as National Guard units continue to support security missions at home their ability to prepare for future domestic missions is hamstrung by the lack of

strategic direction from DOD or NORTHCOM. The lack of such information and DOD's heavy reliance on the Guard for overseas missions makes it increasingly difficult for states to prepare Guard units for domestic security.

"Currently, the National Guard has been given no defined requirements for defense of the homeland. That is unacceptable since the Guard is on standby at all times for homeland emergencies and states cannot accurately prepare for these crises until DOD better defines their domestic mission. I know DOD's Secretary for Homeland Defense Paul McHale has worked with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to achieve a balanced and comprehensive approach to defending our country at home and we look forward to seeing his report," Davis said. "Congressman Jim Gibbons (R-NV) and I also worked hard to include language in this year's DOD Authorization that alters U.S.C. Title 32 to allow for federal resourcing of National Guard security missions in the United States. However, this is not just a federal responsibility; we need state Governors to be an active and integrated part of this planning for our long term national security."

"At this point, the best way to thank the men and women of the National Guard for their dedication and sacrifice abroad and at home is for DOD to equip and resource the National Guard for the warfight, and define the role of the National Guard for homeland missions sooner as opposed to later," added Davis.

"The National Guard stands ready to answer the call both at home and abroad, and this study confirms Army and Air Guard units are essential in meeting today's war fighting and homeland security missions. But this study also cautions the Pentagon, and Congress, that Guard readiness cannot be taken for granted," commented Subcommittee Chairman Shays. "As Guard units are increasingly called upon to meet critical requirements of the war plan, their readiness in terms of training and equipment must be as carefully maintained as their active duty counterparts. And as the Guard role in homeland security is more clearly defined, readiness to perform that vital mission must be fully resourced and measured just as closely."

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